



House Homeland Security
Subcommittee on Transportation Security & Infrastructure Protection
“An Assessment of Checkpoint Security: Are Our Airports Keeping Passengers Safe?”
Testimony of Mitchel Laskey, President & CEO of Brijot Imaging Systems, Inc.
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Chairwoman Jackson Lee, Ranking Member Dent, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

Brijot Imaging Systems was established in 2004. We are a small business in every sense of the word, with approximately 50 employees working directly for the company. Brijot Imaging Systems is a global leader in passive millimeter wave technology, with customers in the global homeland security, loss prevention, and DoD markets. I expect our company to triple in size over the next two years as the demand for screening technology that protects both privacy and health continues to grow domestically and internationally.

We have developed an advanced imaging technology system, called SafeScreen, for use at airport checkpoints. Passive millimeter wave technology is unique in that it does not reveal the anatomical details of the individual being screened, nor does it emit radiation. Instead, it detects anomalies in temperature by reading the natural millimeter wave energy emitted by the human body.

In addition to protecting the privacy of the traveler, passive millimeter wave technology is safe and better at detecting hidden objects than current advanced imaging technologies.

Active millimeter and backscatter technologies shower passengers with either microwave energy or ionizing radiation. Those systems produce images by looking at the energy reflected back off of the body, and searching for any shapes on the body that do not belong. This technique can miss explosives that are disguised in certain ways.

Passive millimeter wave technology, on the other hand, detects a difference between the millimeter waves your body emits naturally and the energy emitted from a hidden object, making it more likely that a powder or liquid will be found.

Compared to currently deployed advanced imaging technologies, SafeScreen has a smaller footprint, taking up less than two-thirds of the space that is planned for in the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) requirements; increases throughput by two-fold; and has a lower cost of ownership.

We received SAFETY Act certification in April of 2009, and have been tested and approved for use by the Sandia National Laboratories, the U.S. Air Force Research Laboratory, the U.S. Marshal Services, as well as by the governments of Israel, France, Germany, Scotland, and Italy.

In September of 2007, the UK Home Office Scientific Development Branch also tested and approved our technology for UK government purchase. In December of that year, Brijot received a contract to deploy systems nationally to UK seaports and airports.

We have submitted a statement for the record from John Whyte, the past Deputy Director of Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs and Chair of Detection Technology Board, who believed that this technology can detect not only drugs and currency concealed on the body, but would also be useful in meeting the other requirements of the UK border agency, including the detection of hidden documents. He said:

The testing program for this equipment was rigorous and it was clear that Brijot listened and responded to our needs. This approach was most welcome and an integral part of our decision to purchase Brijot's equipment.

Without releasing sensitive information, I can share that large currency and drug seizures have resulted from our technology's deployment at UK ports of entry.

Our first system designed for an airport security checkpoint was deployed to Heathrow Airport in 2006 on a trial basis. Based on the same passive millimeter wave technology that is currently being tested by TSA for deployment to U.S. airports, this particular piece of equipment was designed to meet UK border agency requirements. It has a very small footprint, is mobile, and able to operate on batteries. Our systems are still deployed at Heathrow, as well as six other airports in the UK today.

As evidence of public acceptance of our technology, it has been approved as safe to use by the government of Saudi Arabia, where more than 90 percent of the population is Muslim.

It has also been tested and approved for use by the testing laboratory of the Vatican.

As further evidence of the continued international demand for passive millimeter wave technology, we have responded to requests and conducted trials at airports in China, Italy, India, Malaysia, the Middle East, and the Philippines. We also have pending requests for future trials in France, Germany, Poland, Romania, Ireland, Taiwan, Kenya, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam.

Although not the purpose of this hearing, I think it is worth briefly mentioning the use of passive millimeter wave technology as a loss prevention measure in the commercial market, where it is much easier to identify Return on Investment (ROI). Our systems are deployed to large distribution centers for global retailers across the country and typically achieve ROI within three months of implementation due to reduced shrinkage. Brendan Alexander, the Director of Loss Prevention for Best Buy Canada, said:

As a retailer that has relied on more traditional security measures such as metal detectors for the past 20 years, we have evolved our screening process by incorporating less intrusive, faster and more accurate technology measures as those offered by passive millimeter wave systems.

In the meantime, we are also moving forward with TSA as part of their Qualified Product List (QPL) process to receive the necessary approval to deploy systems to U.S. airports.

As a small company doing business with TSA for the first time, I can say that the process has sometimes appeared daunting. I think our colleagues at TSA will agree that we had a lot to learn about the process, and they probably had something to learn about passive millimeter wave technology.

Our first opportunity to be considered by TSA for approval was in 2006 when TSA issued a Broad Agency Announcement for what was then referred to as “Whole Body Imagers (WBIs).” Due to the relative “newness” of our passive millimeter wave technology at that time, the specifications that were written did not match up with what we have to offer and we were unable to respond.

Two technologies were approved during this initial process, and they remain the only two whole body imaging technologies that are currently available for implementation at U.S. airports today.

In April of 2008, TSA reopened – and we entered – the QPL process for whole body imaging technology. Again, as a small company that had never done business with TSA, we had a lot of questions and I think it’s fair to say – have experienced a couple snags as we learned how to navigate the process. By 2008 we developed a new product called SafeScreen, using the same passive millimeter wave technology, that conformed to the TSA requirements and specifications.

I am pleased to report that SafeScreen has been in testing this week at TSA in a simulated checkpoint environment to see how it will perform under various concepts of operation and to collect operating metrics such as throughput and false alarm rates.

While we are encouraged with our progress within TSA, the events of Christmas Day have changed the international landscape and provided an unintended advantage to the two technologies that were approved as part of the initial certification in 2006. Prior to Christmas Day 2009, our international business prospects were booming – people wanted a security solution that provided privacy and protected health. However, given the recently renewed prominence of TSA’s role in establishing international aviation security standards, we are now being told by our partners overseas that we must first receive TSA approval for our technology before it can be deployed at their airports.

We are, as you can imagine, anxious for this approval and eager to work with TSA toward earning it.

I am grateful for the opportunity to share our story, and thank you for your time today.